

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 13-207—sHB 6623

Education Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

SUMMARY: This act makes numerous changes in the education statutes that affect standardized testing. Specifically, it:

1. allows students to take their final mastery examinations in reading, writing, math, and science in either grade 10 or 11, rather than only in grade 10, beginning in the 2013-14 school year;
2. renames the “state-wide mastery examination” as the “mastery examination,” but retains the “state-wide” name for the science test;
3. requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to (a) approve, as well as provide and supervise, administration of all mastery exams and (b) conduct a study on the use of standardized testing in public schools;
4. allows endowed or incorporated high schools to base promotion or graduation on a student achieving a satisfactory mastery exam score, even though state law does not require such schools to administer the exams;
5. extends to April 1, 2014 the deadline for the education commissioner to develop and implement an assessment tool for measuring a child’s kindergarten readiness (prior law required that this be done within available appropriations by October 1, 2007); and
6. eliminates the statutory requirement that mastery testing conform with the testing requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

The state received an NCLB waiver in May 2012 from the federal government and must now comply with its provisions instead. Elsewhere state law requires a statewide performance plan that uses mastery scores to comply with federal requirements.

The act also makes many technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013, except for the provision on the study of standardized testing, which takes effect upon passage.

STUDY OF STANDARDIZED TESTING

The act requires SDE to conduct a study of standardized test use in public schools. The study topics must include (1) the fiscal, administrative, and educational impact of standardized tests, including the impacts on instructional time, curricula, professional flexibility, administrative time and focus, and school district budgets and (2) a review of standardized tests currently implemented and proposed in the state. SDE must submit the study and any recommendations to the Education Committee by July 1, 2014.

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